



July 18, 2006

OPEN LETTER

Gowlings
attn: Roger Tassé
160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1P 1C3

Dear Mr. Tassé:

I am very concerned that you have made no announcement of public meetings as part of your review of the Toronto Port Authority. I would like to rectify this oversight by inviting you to meet publicly with Toronto waterfront residents and other Toronto citizens and stakeholders concerned about the use of the Island Airport and the conduct of the TPA.

As the former constituency assistant and a current candidate for City Councillor for Ward 20 in Toronto where the Island Airport is located, I have met over the past eight years with thousands of residents and business owners, organized and attended dozens of meetings, and worked with numerous community organizations and resident associations. I can assure you that the unaccountable behaviour of the Toronto Port Authority and the prospect of increased air traffic are major issues in this ward, where people are concerned about noise, pollution and safety and security. These were deciding issues in the last Municipal election, where people voted resoundingly for Mayor David Miller who led the campaign to stop the TPA's plans to build a bridge to the airport. It was also a major issue in the last federal election campaign, where opposition to the TPA and the airport extended to candidates in all major parties in waterfront ridings. Citizens are engaged and concern continues to run high. MP Olivia Chow has held two waterfront town hall meetings in recent months that attracted several hundred participants.

From the beginning, a central problem of the TPA and its partners has been that it operates in secrecy as though it is a private business rather than a public trust. It makes decisions without public consultation, involvement, or approval; indeed, it makes decisions in the face of outright citizen disapproval, and seemingly without any clear accountability to the Ministry of Transport. It has a record of operating by lawsuit and stealth, with no apparent reference to basic governance standards. It would be indeed unfortunate if your examination of this kind of record were conducted in secret as well.

I know your report is due Sept. 1. Before that happens, I would like to invite you to come to a public meeting, to receive the input of the people of the waterfront community on what they have witnessed throughout the course of the Toronto Port Authority's existence -- from bridge to lawsuits to turbojets, all in the face of widespread public opposition. And, of course, listen to the views of the citizens of Toronto on the future of the TPA and the lands on which it has operated. The TPA is, at least in theory, a public agency. Its business should be transparent. The Tassé inquiry is a publicly-funded review -- surely at least a portion of its business should be transparent as well.

I urge you to come to Toronto and consult publicly with citizens. I would be more than happy to help coordinate a meeting or series of hearings at a time of your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Helen Kennedy
City Council Candidate
Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina